BEST EXAMPLES OF DESCRIPTION, LANGUAGE, STRUCTURE AND FORM IN ‘IF’:

KEY WORD USED IN EACH PARAGRAPH

QUOTE

INTRO: ANSWER THE QUESTION AND USE THE KEY WORD AS SUCCINCTLY AS YOU CAN.

1. TITLE: It’s called ‘If’ so emphasises the importance of self-motivation. Success CAN be achieved but ONLY IF. Conditional used throughout the poem and the word is repeated at the start of alternate lines in each stanza.
2. STANZA 1 HIGHLIGHTS: Poet uses euphemisms/metaphors e.g. ‘keep your head’. Suggests that being calm in a chaotic situation is a mark of a successful ‘Man’. Kipling also uses repetition to put forward contrasts: ‘…being lied about, don’t deal in lies’. This helps to emphasise the two potential sides of a character, the positive or successful and the negative.
3. STANZA 2 HIGHLIGHTS: The poet often uses hyphens to extend his advice: ‘If you can think – and not make thoughts your aim’. This allows the reader to understand the precise nature of the fatherly advice.
4. ALL STANZAS – The structure of the poem seems to reflect the poet’s ideas of success as being an on-going process, a list of cumulative qualities that one can strive for throughout life. The form also reflects this continuous process as this long list of aspirational qualities only ends, at the end of the poem: ‘…you’ll be a Man, my son!’. The capitalised ‘Man’ elevates the importance of this status as being more desirable than possessing ‘..the Earth and everything that’s in it’. Equally important to the poet is the ‘ownership’ of his role as father, ‘My son!’. This is seen in the use of the exclamative and the possessive ‘My’ which end the poem.
5. The language the poem is motivational and often contrasting with use of hyperbole throughout. In the second stanza, Kipling personifies the idea of ‘Triumph and Disaster’ demonstrating their importance in navigating a successful path through life. The concept of triumph is a synonym of success and implies a much more emotive and motivational tone. Similarly, the idea of disaster is presented as triumph’s hyperbolic alternative. The challenge the father is presenting his son with in the poem is the ability to find a balance in life.
6. Look at later stanzas: possibly S4 About taking risks, physical effort. Personification of ‘Will’ and exclamation mark.
7. Look at final stanza – how does Kipling draw it together? Hyperbole – the EARTH AND EVERYTHING THAT’S IN IT – and he even adds to this.
8. CONC – End with the end and use the key word in conclusion ‘SUCCESS’. Ultimately Kipling’s message does not end until he refers to the essential relationship upon which this poem is focus – paternal advice to a son. The emotive way in which the poet finishes emphasises how much being a success in life depends on his definition of ‘A Man’.